

Elementary **ENGLISH**

OCTOBER 1948

Poetry For Early
Childhood

Modern Approaches
To Reading

Reading Readiness
Readability

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

Elementary ENGLISH

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Verse and Song For Democratization

SEMA WILLIAMS HERMAN¹

The classroom teacher who seeks to develop and establish attitudes of understanding and friendliness toward all people in very young children, will find that the key to all democratic relationships lies in the term "Neighbors," a word whose meaning the child has experienced in his own home environment at an early age, and with which the parent is familiar and sympathetic.

The image of the helpful neighbor lifted from the home environment serves as an introduction to the new relationships which the child is to meet in the classroom. The ideal of the "Good Neighbor," once presented and defined, should be emphasized at every propitious moment in every phase of the school day.²

In conjunction with the actual experience of neighborly understanding and cooperation in classroom and school environs through group activities, the media of poetry and song will be found of value as a well-organized means of enabling the child to express his newly acquired attitudes, and extending this influence to the home and immediate neighborhood.

Children learn many jingles from their playmates, and parents of youngsters of this age pay a great deal of attention to the things

¹Primary teacher at the Gregory School, Chicago, Illinois.

²For a detailed account of some activities, see "I Teach A Way of Living," *Elementary English*, November 1947. Material in this article should not be quoted without permission of the author.

which their little ones say. Often repeated in relaxed moments, messages contained in rhyme and tune expose parents and playmates to propaganda for goodwill in a way and at a time when they may take note of it.

Attitude song and poem are important adjuncts to the day's teaching, for they illustrate and set patterns for individual and group behavior. They may be used also for morale purposes, as well as positive methods for self and class examination and discipline.

Classroom attitudes of cooperation and interest in the welfare of others, and participation by pupils in activities that put these to constant practice should be established before children are given songs or poems to learn.³ Thus by experiencing the meaning of the verse, memory work will be easier, and explanation of phrases unnecessary, as the message will have been understood in the light of a pattern of living.

The poems which follow are some of those written and used by retarded children as well as those of above average intelligence, in Grades 1B through 3A, during an experimental period of more than five years. Growing out of actual classroom needs, they were projected into plays and used in assembly programs for the information and education of the other youngsters in the school as well as of their parents.

THE AMERICAN WAY.

We're learning to live the American Way,
By sharing our things with our neighbors each day.
By helping in work, and sharing at play,
We're learning to live the American way.

Suggestions for Classroom Use.

This poem defines a way of life, sets a pattern for individual and group behavior, and may be used as an accolade of praise to encourage such, as well as a means of reproof. The concept that a Good

³For additional classroom procedures, see "Democracy In The Primary Grades," by Sema W. Herman, in *Journal of Education*, Jan., 1948.

American is a Good Neighbor lends real meaning to Americanism, because it is expressed in terms that are part of the children's scheme of living. Expressions of praise following a neighborly act, such as, "That's doing things the American Way"; "He's a "Good Neighbor"; "He's a Good American"; will bring forth understanding smiles of pleasure. Acts of selfishness or thoughtlessness may be re-proved by addressing the offender privately with, "Do you think 'George Green' (use the child's own name to allow him to regard his action objectively) acted like a Good Neighbor?" or "What do you think 'George Green' should have done (could have done) as a Good Neighbor?" Recitation of part of the verse followed by examination of offending act, in the light of "good neighborliness," is another variation of the same procedure that has been found successful.

Toward the end of the semester children will begin using such expression of praise and reproof among themselves, interpreting every kindly act in this wise; and the term of reproof, "You're not a Good Neighbor," reasonable and understood by the youngsters, will eliminate name-calling so prevalent among pupils in situations of dissatisfaction.

FRIENDLY NEIGHBORS.

If you want to be happy,
Give something away;
Share something you have
With a neighbor, each day.

Share something to do
Or something to know,
And you'll find friendly neighbors
Wherever you go.

Suggestions for Classroom Use.

"Friendly Neighbors," another attitude poem, was first taught in Grade 1B, but has been used successfully since with classes of older children to encourage generosity and friendliness among them. The caption "Friendly Neighbors" may also be used to head a chart

of pictures of every child in the classroom, (as sketched by each other) of citizens of various races in our country, or citizens of other lands.

The next poem, "My Neighbors," was originally written for second and third grade children, but has since been used with first graders. It may serve as a focal point of commencement for any social studies program or may be memorized at its conclusion to sum up an attitude for democratic living.

MY NEIGHBORS.

My Neighbors, are people everywhere,
Many, I do not know;
Some of them plant the food I eat
Or help to make it grow.
Some neighbors make the clothes I wear,
My toys, the books I read,
And by truck and train, or boat and plane
Bring me the things I need.

I've never met these neighbors
And whether they're short or tall,
Or black, brown, white or yellow
Doesn't matter so much at all,
Nor what faith they say their prayers in;
All I know, where ever they be
These neighbors I have never seen
Work like good friends for me.

I too, work for my neighbors,
I help them every day.
I help them in my neighborhood,
In school, or where I play.
And I know that when I am grown up
I'll do my share some way
For many, many neighbors
Near my home, or far away.

Suggestions for Classroom Use.

This poem may be used, and it has been so used, to introduce the children to neighbors in their community or elsewhere in the world upon whom they are dependent for the necessities of living.

Samples of food and other products which the children are familiar with, put up in small cellophane bags, may form the basis of a table display, "Neighbors Work For Us." Figures of people of various races and nations, drawn and cut out, may be placed near each product they are responsible for. Older children may either draw the background for each product and figure showing the locale and something of the process of production of each item, or secure from the local library photographs of such. Children are generally enthusiastic about any exhibition work of this type and their enthusiasm may be used to interest the adults at home in the facts that the youngsters are acquiring. I once worked out a play from the knowledge gained by such an experience, and the children loved it. Furthermore, memory work was no problem at all because it was an outgrowth of something which was already a part of my pupils' background.

A series of directive posters interpreting room activities or neighborhood activities to illustrate such captions as, "A Good Neighbor Helps Others, At Home, In The Playground, On The Street, In School." Posters to stimulate interest in charitable drives with the heading, "A Good Neighbor Shares, Won't You?". With the older child, this poem may suggest a chart, "Neighbors In Other Countries Make These For Us. Neighbors In Our Country Make These For Them." The chart may have cutouts, drawings, or samples of products fastened opposite or below the flag and name of the nation or racial group.

In selecting poems or songs to build friendly attitudes, it is best to choose those which make a direct or personal appeal, so that the child may identify himself and his actions with the message they contain. It should also be borne in mind that the verse or song most successful in promoting friendliness and cooperation does so from the positive point of view⁴ with the ultimate result of remaining an active factor in the memory of the growing youngster, enabling him to review and express and draw inspiration and strength from, the "Incident In Baltimore" is an example of negative approach.

(Continued on Page 388)

A Readability Formula In Practice*

RUDOLF FLESCH

Late in 1943 I published a study, *Marks of Readable Style*,¹ which contained a statistical formula for the measurement of the "readability" (comprehension difficulty) of writing. Many similar formulas had been developed before; however, for various reasons, particularly because I used a novel approach, my formula was soon used widely and far beyond its original purpose. Early in 1946 I republished it in my book, *The Art of Plain Talk*²—to my knowledge the first attempt to acquaint the lay public with an objective technique for measuring readability. The following is a brief report on some of the applications of my formula during the past three years, and their significance for further research in this field.

The formula combines the measurements of three language elements: (1) the average sentence length in words; (2) the number (per hundred words) of affixes (prefixes, suffixes, and inflectional endings); and (3) the number (per hundred words) of references to people (by names, pronouns, or certain arbitrarily chosen "personal" words like *mother*, *boy*, *people*). In contrast to almost all earlier readability formulas, it does not take vocabulary diversity into account; instead, the count of affixes is designed to test the abstractness rather than the richness of the vocabulary used. This difference seems to be the reason for its higher sensitivity at the adult reading level and for its appeal to professional writers and editors. It is obviously impractical to observe strict vocabulary limitations in the preparation of reading materials; but it is entirely feasible to avoid over-abstractness by focusing on prefixes and suffixes.

The original purpose of the formula was its use as a tool in the selection of reading materials in adult education. But the selection

¹Flesch, Rudolf. *Marks of Readable Style; a Study in Adult Education*. New York, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1943. (Contr. to Ed. No. 897)

²Flesch, Rudolf. *The Art of Plain Talk*. New York, Harper & Brothers, 1946.

*A paper presented to the National Conference on Research in English, Atlantic City, March 4, 1947.

and grading of books and pamphlets leads logically to the revision of manuscripts to fit the reading capacities of certain audiences; manuscript revision leads to instructions for the writing of assigned materials; and specific writing instructions lead to general training programs designed to produce the habit of readable writing. And so my formula developed into an instrument for book selection and grading, for writing, for editing, and for the teaching of composition. Here are some examples of these four different applications:

In the field of book selection, the American Library Association published a list, *Books for Adult Beginners*³, which is primarily based on my formula. The compilers, Miss Pauline J. Fihe and her associates on the staff of the Public Library of Cincinnati, tested the comprehension difficulty of each book included in the list, which contains materials for adults with a reading ability equivalent to Grades I to VII. Because of the nature of my formula and its deviation from the conventional vocabulary-count approach, *Books for Adult Beginners* differs markedly from a preliminary edition, published in 1935, and from other similar lists. It contains fewer materials that were specially prepared or adapted for unskilled readers, and more "discoveries" among highly readable books that were written for the general public.

A somewhat related application of my formula is its use in the Readability Unit in the Division of Field Studies and Training of the U. S. Department of Agriculture Extension Service. The Unit, set up in 1944 and headed by Mrs. Amy Gronna Cowing, has the function of analyzing and criticizing State Extension publications and cooperating in the improvement of their usefulness to farmers and their families, particularly with regard to their estimated reading comprehension level. The consistent use of my formula by the Unit has resulted in making Extension editors and specialists throughout the country aware of its underlying principles. Several publication work-

³Fihe, Pauline J., Wallace, Viola, and Schulz, Martha, compilers. *Books for Adult Beginners; Grades I to VII*. rev. ed. Chicago: American Library Association, 1946.

shops have been held in various parts of the country, and more are being planned. In a recent article by Mrs. Cowing, "They Speak His Language,"⁴ the work of the Unit is described in more detail.

The formula has also been used to test the readability of advertisements⁵, children's books⁶, newspapers⁷, textbooks, industrial publications, and many other types of materials. As yet, these tests are too scattered to draw any significant general conclusions.

As an editorial tool, the formula has been used to set objective standards for contributed and staff-written materials. It gives editors the advantage of effective criticism without the risk of personal offense. The most elaborate such application has been made in the U. S. Soil Conservation Service, where rigid readability standards were set for all publications. Writers and contributors were forewarned of these standards about a year in advance of their official introduction, and every effort was made to familiarize them with the formula and its use. To date, the most conspicuous result of this system is the pamphlet, *Our American Land*⁸, which shows obvious improvement over previous similar publications by the Service.

Another editorial office where the use of the formula has become routine is that of *Wallaces' Farmer and Iowa Homestead* in Des Moines, Iowa. Its editor, Mr. Donald R. Murphy, has recently engaged in an interesting series of readability-readership studies. A number of articles in one issue of the paper were simplified by means of my formula and a split-run edition was mailed out—the original

⁴Cowing, Amy Gronna. "They Speak His Language." *Journal of Home Economics*, v. 37, no. 8, October 1945, p. 487-489.

⁵Alden, Julian. "Lots of Names—Short Sentences—Simple Words", *Printer's Ink*, June 29, 1945.

⁶Miller, Leo R. "Reading Grade Placement of the First 23 Books Awarded the John Newbery Prize," *Elementary School Journal*, March 1946, p. 394-399.

⁷Gunning, Robert. "Gunning Finds Papers Too Hard to Read," *Editor and Publisher*, May 19, 1945, p. 12.

⁸U. S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service. *Our American Land; the Story of its Abuse and Conservation*. (Misc. Publ. No. 596) Washington, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1946.

version of the articles going to one part of the state and the rewritten version going to the other. Then a conventional readership study was made in the field. The results of the first experiment showed in one case that the simplified version attracted 18% more readers than the original and that these 18% came mostly from the younger age groups. Further experiments are now under way.

An interesting attempt to set standards for the general output of a writing staff rather than for particular assignments is the booklet, *Readability in News Writing*⁹, published by the United Press. In this booklet, the results of two consecutive tests of UP wire copy by my formula are reported and UP staff writers are urged to simplify their style accordingly. The booklet has become widely known in the journalistic profession and apparently has had much influence on newspaper writing throughout the country. Its most outstanding feature—the warning against overlong lead sentences—has been adopted by the Associated Press, the *Chicago Daily News*, the *New York Times*, and many other press services and newspapers. Direct experiments with my formula were made, among others, by the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Look* magazine, and *Newsweek* magazine.¹⁰

The principles embodied in my formula were also recommended in a recent book on the preparation of Christian literature to be distributed abroad to semiliterate or newly literate readers.¹¹

Aside from such uses for special purposes and situations, the formula has also been applied simply as a device in the teaching of writing. Here belongs the pamphlet *How Does Your Writing Read?*¹², prepared by the U.S. Council of Personnel Administration

⁹United Press Associations. *Readability in News Writing; Report on an Experiment by United Press*. New York, United Press Associations, 1945.

¹⁰See *What Newsweek Wants! A Blueprint for the Staff and Correspondents*. New York: Newsweek, n. d.

¹¹Ure, Ruth. *The Highway of Print; a World-Wide Study of the Production and Distribution of Christian Literature*. New York: Friendship Press, 1946.

¹²U. S. Civil Service Commission. *How Does Your Writing Read?* Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1946.

and issued by the U.S. Civil Service Commission. The pamphlet contains a brief summary of my formula; copies were distributed among Federal employees engaged in the preparation of written materials. It is, of course, impossible to say whether and to what extent this pamphlet has improved the language of our government.

Since its republication in popular form, the formula has also been used in a number of Freshman English and advanced composition courses, and *The Art of Plain Talk* has been made recommended or, sometimes, required reading. In courses in writing which I taught myself—first at the U. S. Department of Agriculture Graduate School, then at New York University—I naturally made the principles of my formula the main feature. I did not, however, put any emphasis on the techniques of readability testing and supplemented the formula by a number of other devices, all designed to develop the habit of a simple, forceful style. Among these devices were particularly lists of simple prepositions and conjunctions, lists of simple verbs and verb-adverb combinations, and training in the use of the *Thorndike Century Senior Dictionary*¹³ or Michael West's *New Method English Dictionary*¹⁴ to find simple synonyms for complex words and expressions. The details of the course, as taught in Washington, D. C., were described in an article, "Teaching Bureaucrats Plain English."¹⁵

Confusing as this picture of the various applications of my formula may be, there are a number of general observations that can be derived from them. In the first place, the formula has proved itself as a practical tool that has been used by many people in many different situations. Its wide acceptance shows clearly the vital need for

¹³Thorndike, E. L. *Thorndike Century Senior Dictionary*. Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1941.

¹⁴West, Michael P. and Endicott, James G. *The New Method English Dictionary; Explaining the Meaning of 24,000 Items Within a Vocabulary of 1,490 Words*. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., rev. ed. 1935.

¹⁵Flesch, Rudolf. "Teaching Bureaucrats Plain English." *College English*, v. 7, no. 8, May, 1946, p. 470-474.

scientific instruments of this type and the importance of further research in this field.

The enthusiasm with which the formula has been adopted by many of its users is in itself an interesting phenomenon. By coincidence—or maybe because of the *Zeitgeist*—readability research parallels the movement against jargon and “gobbledygook,” and the general trend toward simple writing. During the past three years alone, jargon was attacked by such writers as Robert Graves and Alan Hodge,¹⁶ H. L. Mencken,¹⁷ George Orwell,¹⁸ Ivor Brown,¹⁹ Jacques Barzun,²⁰ and Maury Maverick;²¹ Basic English gained new impetus; and simplicity was urged for all types of writing from literature²² to advertising.²³ A scientific means of proving the value of simple expression was therefore greeted in many quarters simply as excellent additional ammunition in the perennial fight against jargon.

Because of the war, there has been little research activity in this field during the past three years. No new formulas were developed, although the Lorge formula, originally published in 1939,²⁴ was re-

¹⁶Graves, Robert, and Hodge, Alan. *The Reader Over Your Shoulder*. New York: Macmillan, 1944.

¹⁷Mencken, H. L. *Supplement One to the American Language*. New York: Knopf, 1945.

¹⁸Orwell, George. “Politics and the English Language.” *New Republic*, June 17, 1946, p. 872-874, and June 24, 1946, p. 903-904.

¹⁹Brown, Ivor J. C. *A Word in Your Ear, and Just Another Word*. New York: Dutton, 1945.

²⁰Barzun, Jacques. “The Counterfeiters.” *Atlantic Monthly*, v. 177, May 1946, p. 128-30.

²¹Maverick, Maury. “The Case Against Gobbledygook.” *New York Times Magazine*, May 21, 1944, p. 11.

²²See Cowley, Malcolm. “The Middle American Style: Davy Crockett to Ernest Hemingway.” *New York Times Book Review*, July 15, 1945, p. 3.

²³Woolf, James Davis. *Advertising to the Mass Market*. New York: Ronald Press, c1946.

²⁴Lorge, Irving. “Predicting Reading Difficulty of Selections for Children.” *Elementary English Review*, v. 16, October, 1939, p. 229-233.

published in 1944.²⁵ Meanwhile, two studies by Leifeste²⁶ and Davis²⁷ furnished additional evidence that vocabulary diversity is an unsatisfactory measure of reading difficulty.

However, though readability studies were scarce, a number of statistical studies of language were pursued in related areas of psychology, particularly in the field of personality study. The fairly large bibliography in this field has been surveyed by Sanford²⁸ and more recently by Wendall Johnson in his book *People in Quandaries*.²⁹ A different line of attack was chosen by the British statistician George U. Yule in his book, *The Statistical Study of Literary Vocabulary*,³⁰ published in 1944. Though these studies do not deal with comprehension difficulty, but with language as the projection of the writer's personality, they are based on techniques that may to some extent be utilized for readability research. This applies particularly to the so-called "verb-adjective quotient," used by Boder³¹ and others, which could easily be adapted for readability measurement.

The direction further readability research could and should take is therefore fairly clear. What is needed is a refinement of the available measurement techniques and the utilization of work in related

²⁵Lorge, Irving. "Predicting Readability." *Teachers College Record*, v. 45, no. 6, March, 1944, p. 404-419.

²⁶Leifeste, Bertha V. "An Investigation of the Reliability of the sampling of Reading Material." *Journal of Educational Research*, v. 37, no. 6, February, 1944, p. 441-450.

²⁷Davis, Frederick B. "The Interpretation of Frequency Ratings Obtained from 'The Teacher's Word Book'." *Journal of Educational Psychology*, v. 35, no. 3, March, 1944, p. 169-174.

²⁸Sanford, F. H. "Speech and Personality." *Psychol. Bulletin*, v. 39, Dec. 1942, p. 811.

²⁹Johnson, Wendell. *People in Quandaries*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1946.

³⁰Yule, George U. *The Statistical Study of Literary Vocabulary*. New York: Macmillan, 1944.

³¹Boder, David P. "The Adjective-Verb Quotient; a Contribution to the Psychology of Language." *Psychological Record*, v. 3, no. 22, March, 1940, p. 310-343.

fields, particularly the psychology of personality. A broadened formula should include measurement of other language elements, particularly verbs, adjectives, and particles. Above all, the problem should be approached not as a problem in education, library science, journalism, or whatnot, but as a problem in linguistics. The analysis techniques should be those used by modern linguistic science (as described, for instance, in Bloch and Trager's *Outline of Linguistic Analysis*³²) and not methods invented *ad hoc* by each new researcher. It seems likely that my formula gained its practical usefulness because it contains instead of the "non-linguistic" vocabulary measure the "linguistic" affix-count. New formulas should adhere even more strictly to the methods of modern linguistics. If so, they will not only be better yardsticks of readability, but they will also create better writing and editing. As to the teaching of composition, let me quote from the recent report on *The English Language in American Education*, by the Modern Language Association of America:³³ "The youth needs. . . to develop the habits of clarifying his ideas in language which will communicate them to others. . . If he is to form these habits effectively, he needs expert help. . ." Maybe sometime in the future a readability formula will give him that expert help.

³²Bloch, Bernard, and Trager, George L. *Outline of Linguistic Analysis*. Baltimore: Linguistic Society of America, 1942.

³³Modern Language Association of America. Commission on Trends in Education. *The English Language in American Education*. New York: Modern Language Association, 1945.

Readers who have been intrigued by the interesting article of Rudolf Flesch will look forward to an important series on Readability to begin in the January issue of *Elementary English*. A committee of the National Conference on Research in English, under the chairmanship of Dr. Edgar Dale, will deal with all significant aspects of the subject.

Little Children Love Poetry

LUCILE McCAULEY¹

Children love poetry! They enjoy hearing poems while they escape the everyday world and establish themselves as kings of glorious spheres in far away mystical lands. They enjoy listening to poems which repeat in sing-song rhythm the plain little happenings of every day. They enjoy listening to tuneful poems as they chant along in one tone—little words and enormous words. They enjoy mimicking the same up and down inflections that the teacher uses when she reads little poems to them. They feel a "growing up" thrill when they open a little book to read a poem independently.

Even at play, poems beat out the rhythm of jumping ropes and of pounding rubber balls on the sidewalks. Children love poetry!

The Environment and the Teacher

Poetry helps a child to interpret experiences. If he lives in an environment rich in opportunities to be imaginative, to create, to observe, to wonder, to talk freely and to explore, he will develop greater language power.

Even though a child lives in such an environment, he needs the guiding hand of his teacher to encourage him to use descriptive words, to help him form sentences instead of incomplete phrases, and to help him to speak distinctly. Her speech should be a good pattern for him to follow.

The teacher must put such glamor into the little ten cent poem book that Johnny will hurry over to the library table and browse through that book during some of his free time.

¹Miss McCauley is a teacher of first grade in the Bancroft School, Minneapolis, Minn. This is the first of two articles on the subject of children's interests in poetry. Next month Miss McCauley will make a report of a survey of children's interests which she carried on in several Minneapolis schools.

A Classroom Environment for Poetry—Time and Place

Any time is the time for poetry. Any place is the place for poetry. A child's growth in language is in direct proportion to his opportunities to see and hear poetry, to see and hear correct English, and to practice good use of words and sentences. Therefore the child's environment should be interesting, colorful, and full of learning opportunities for the little inquiring mind.

I do not believe in setting aside ten minutes a day for poetry. Poetry may find its way into any subject of the day. The time for poetry may come during social studies, rest time, science period, free rhythms period, or a reading class, depending upon what happens and when the poem seems appropriate to the occasion.

Take our own little classroom, for example. In the early part of the morning we plan our work for the day. That is the time we often say our little "class made" poem,

We plan our work, we plan our play,
We like to keep busy each happy day!

The other day a sparrow flew against our window pane. Then, as if stunned by the impact, he fluttered to the outside sill and sat a moment. One child suggested that we put out some crumbs for the little fellow. This we did, and, to the joy of thirty-seven bright-eyed youngsters, the sparrow picked up a crust and flew off. It was then that I read the little poem, "Once I Saw a Little Bird."

Come hop, hop, hop.
So I said, "Little bird,
Won't you stop, stop, stop"
I was going to the window
To say, "How do you do?"
But he shook his little tail
And far away he flew.

Some days the children come in from recess—excited, panting, and not at all ready to settle down for more formal work of the day. Then is the time I pick up a poetry book, draw up a chair, and begin to read. I say nothing, but softly and with pleasure I begin to read a

poem they may never have heard before. Often it is a poem which tells a story—for example, "Meeting the Easter Bunny," by Rowena Bastien Bennett² or that delightful song of the seashore by A. A. Milne:³

SAND BETWEEN THE TOES

I went down to the shouting sea
Taking Christopher down with me
For Nurse had given us sixpence each
And down we went to the beach.

Perhaps it might be a poem to excite the imagination. One the children love is A. A. Milne's "Yesterday on Oxford Street."

YESTERDAY ON OXFORD STREET

What do you think, my dears,
I had the most exciting time
I've had for years and years.
The buildings looked so straight and tall,
The sky so blue between,
And riding on a motor bus,
I saw a fairy queen!

Sometimes the poems are well known to the children, their special favorites. As I begin to read, they softly whisper a phrase or a word and very soon I have some good choral reading going on without asking for it. A favorite poem of this type is:

There was a little turtle
He lived in a box
He swam in a puddle
And he climbed on the rocks.

Sometimes, if the day is drab, the sky is dark, and the classroom atmosphere seems sober or tense, I read a humorous poem or a non-sense jingle. For example, Edward Lear's "Nonsense Alphabet,"⁴

²Rowena Bennett, "Meeting the Easter Bunny," from *Sung Under the Silver Umbrella*, New York: Macmillan Co., 1938.

³A. A. Milne, *When We Were Very Young*, New York: C. P. Dutton Co., September, 1927.

⁴Edward E. Lear, "Nonsense Alphabet," *Sung Under the Silver Umbrella*, New York; Macmillan Co., 1938, p. 5.

A

A was once an apple pie
Pidy
Widy
Tidy
Pidy
Nice insidy
Apple-pie.

B

B was once a little bear
Beary
Wary
Hairy
Beary
Taky cary,
Little bear!

A favorite for good laughs is "The Funny Old Man and His Wife."⁵ The author is unknown, but he had a good sense of humor, to be sure! His poem went like this:

Once upon a time, in a little wee house,
Lived a funny old man and his wife,
And he said something funny to make her laugh,
Every day of his life.

Poems are fun for relaxation periods. If the children have been sitting for quite a while, I have them stand to recite,

The rabbit has the habit
Of sitting on his heels
With his little paws in front of him
I wonder how it feels!

Immediately we turn ourselves into hopping rabbits—hopping around the room.

The children make up their own rhymes often in free activity period as they play. Most often this takes place when a child plays alone. I have recorded a few on charts for the class to enjoy. Some-

⁵Author Unknown, "The Funny Old Man and His Wife," from *Sung Under the Silver Umbrella*, New York: Macmillan Co., 1938, p. 4. (These are poems for young children selected by the Literature Committee of the A. C. E., Macmillan Company, New York, 1938.)

times I have asked a child to make an illustration for his poem also. He enjoys the thrill of having his own chart; later he takes it home. The following have been recorded since September.

Roger (while playing with our wooden train):

Choo choo choo
Over the mountains you go
Chug chug chug
Pull your load slow slow
Go go go
Slow slow slow.

Betty Claire (while looking at a snowstorm from our classroom window):

Little fairy stars
Little fairy stars
Dance before my eyes
Dance before my eyes
Falling down to the ground
You don't make a sound.

Terry (while riding the rocker):

Rocking up
Rocking down
Rocking out to see the town.

Virginia (while playing the toy xylophone):

Tra la la lee—
Listen to meee—
Tra la la ling—
I'm going to sing—

Poetry has its values in developing a love of animals. The care of pets is an ever inviting study in Social Studies.

One afternoon Carolyn brought her pet kitten to school. The cat was far from beautiful, looking as if it had been handled by far too many children. A sort of a "squeezed up in the middle look" described the cat accurately. We put "Peter" in our pet cage and proceeded with our afternoon's program. During a relaxation period later on, we fed Peter while the children crowded around the pet cage. Peter looked satisfied and lazy as he stalked over to the corner of the cage and sat down to gaze fondly out at Carolyn.

Then I began to recite the old but time-loved poem,⁶

I love little pussy
Her coat is so warm
And if I don't hurt her
She'll do me no harm.
So I'll not pull her tail
Nor drive her away—
But Pussy and I
Very gently will play.

Most of the children knew the poem. They spoke up in loud tones, "I have that in my book at home," or "My mother read me that a long time ago."

Terry suggested that we should make a big reading chart or a poem chart about Peter. We usually did this when a pet came to visit. And so we did! For the poem chart, I taped a large piece of paper to the blackboard as I suggested.

Perhaps we could put something in our poem about how to hold Peter or how to feed him or why we love him.

Donald thought a moment, then jumped to his feet. "I have a start," he said.

I like to hear my Peter purr,
So I put him gently to my neck.

(The "gently" was probably suggested by the other poem.) I praised the "fine start" and printed the first two lines. "Think of good rhyming words as you go along," I added.

All was quiet, then Carolyn piped up,
His whiskers tickle me like heck,
Purr—purr—purr.

You may know how we all laughed! However, we made a little poem chart which Carolyn proudly displayed to visitors as hers. Our finished poem went like this:

I like to hear my Peter purr,
So I put him gently to my neck.
I stroke his long and shiny fur,
I'm sure he loves me just a speck!

⁶"I Love Little Pussy," *Mother Goose, Poems for the Very Young Child*, compiled by D. Knippel, Whitman Publishing Co., Racine, Wis., 1932.

A large crayon illustration, which really enhanced Peter's beauty, was made by a classmate and was pasted at the top of Carolyn's chart.

These examples are but a few of the experiences with poetry which may liven the days in primary school.

Althea Beery, in the article "Listening Activities in the Elementary School,"⁷ states,

If rhythm can be stepped out, young children enjoy deciding whether a poem walks, runs, skips, marches or gallops. Needless to say, all poems do not lend themselves to this treatment but the Mother Goose rhymes do offer possibilities.

Lucile Harrison, in the article, "Developing Readiness for Word Recognition,"⁸ gives exercises using poetry as a valuable aid in the reading readiness program. One exercise is as follows:

The teacher may create little rhymes, the second rhyming word of each pair being supplied by the pupils. For example: Teacher:

I've lost my little kitty white
With her ribbon red.

I know she'll cry when it is (night)
And she can't find her (bed).

Ivah Green⁹ in one of her timely articles on poetry said,

There are surely sometimes in the day when a teacher has a breathing space—"A lull in the day's occupation"—when she could let fall a line or two of humor or inspiration.

Later, she said,

Think how pupils would benefit in appreciation of lovely words put in an unusual setting if teachers had a store of bits of poetry ready for any appropriate moment.

Perhaps it is at a rest period when each small child gets his blanket or rug and settles himself for a quiet nap or a dreamy relaxedness.

It is needless to say that poetry with its beauty, its humor, its fantasy, and its sing-song rhythm of everyday life develops in children a greater appreciation of the world in which they find themselves, as they grow from self-centered little individuals into social beings.

⁸In *The Elementary English Review*, March, 1946, page 122.

⁷In *The Elementary English Review*, February, 1946, page 69.

⁹"The Time for Poetry," *The Elementary English Review*, April, 1946, page 154.

Reading Problems Are Caused

EMILY V. BAKER¹

Recently I heard Professor Harold Hand of the University of Illinois say that about ninety-two to ninety-eight percent of our people are international illiterates. Professor Hand served overseas during the war. He says our boys—whom he calls the bearers of our culture—are extremely provincial. His account of conditions found among our service men corroborates the story given by Leland Stowe in his book, *While Time Remains*. Dr. Hand says our boys were not even interested in our country as a whole. He helped to organize discussion groups among our boys in the service. He tells us that even though our groups were organized under favorable conditions they did not last over eight to ten weeks. On the other hand, he found that, no matter what the disadvantages of camp life were, there was at least one vigorous discussion group in every British, New Zealand, or Australian group.

These situations bear relationship to our problem of reading. Wide reading of worthwhile material helps to break down provincialism and international illiteracy. The greatest objective of teaching reading, as of all education, is to help our people become well-adjusted, happy, competent individuals and sound members of our society. Learning to read is a social responsibility of the individual and, by the same process of reasoning, teaching pupils to read is a social responsibility of the school.

While it is true that many of our reading problems have their beginnings in the primary grades, it is also true that the primary teachers as a group are generally considered the best teachers of reading in our school system.

What, then, causes reading problems to start in the primary school? What causes reading problems at any level?

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At the outset, it is essential that we accept the premise that reading problems are caused. Unless we assume this position, we have no hope of preventing problems. Children are not born to be good or to be bad. They are not born readers or nonreaders. They are born with potentialities. Only a very small percentage—less than five percent of our school population—cannot be taught to read by the methods open to all teachers. Whence, then, come these reading problems?

The Readiness Factor

We cause reading problems when we act on the assumption that learning to read is the most important objective of the primary school. In the March issue of *Elementary English* Dr. Celia Stendler of the University of Illinois says, "Probably one of the greatest detriments to the development of good educational programs in the primary grades is the exaggerated importance attached to reading in the first grade."¹ Ninety-eight percent of the children who are retained in the first grade are retained because they have not learned to read. We cause reading problems when we retain children in the first or second grade because they have not learned to read. The practices which cluster around this policy of retaining children because they cannot read puts teachers and children under pressure which forces the teacher to defy the principles of child development. Because of this practice, teachers try hard to have children learn to read before they are ready. They do not like to fail children. Investigators are pretty well agreed that trying to teach children to read before they are ready is the greatest single cause of problems in reading. Total adjustment to the group life in school should be the criterion for promotion from grade one to grade two. The ability to read is only one small part of this adjustment.

For years psychologists have been telling us that a mental age of six and one-half is necessary to learn to read without undue emotional strain. While this figure must be considered in connection with other bits of information about the child, many educators have come

¹Celia Stendler, "The Ritual of Primary Reading," *Elementary English*, March, 1948, p. 153

to believe that reading might well be postponed until the pupil has passed this point in his mental development.

Since we admit children to first grade before they are six chronologically, not all of our children would be ready to read in the first grade even though all of them had intelligence quotients of one hundred or more. It is interesting to analyze a first grade to note the prospect of success of its members. Unusual circumstances aside, certainly a child with an intelligence quotient of one hundred should be expected to progress at a normal rate through the elementary school. But, if he enters at five years and nine months, as he may, he is not likely to reach the mental age at which it is considered safe for him to have regular, organized work in reading during his first year in school. He will not have a mental age of six and one half before the end of the school year. Should such children be retained?

Some schools are not using the ability to read as a criterion for promotion until the end of the third year. The Winnetka experiment in delaying teaching showed that children who were not given systematic instruction in reading until the middle of the second grade caught up with those who were taught in the first grade within a year and at the end of the seventh grade they were a year ahead of those who were taught in the first grade.² Given two or three years in which to learn to read many children will be spared the stigma of failure. Failure may cause serious difficulties not the least of which is rejection by parents. Margaret Mead³ tells us convincingly in her book called *And Keep Your Powder Dry* that the normal American child is loved on condition that he make good. If he doesn't succeed in school, he lives under the shadow of the threat that he may lose the affection of his parents.

²Mabel Vogel Morphett and Carleton Washburne, "Postponing Formal Instruction: A Seven-Year Case Study," *Official Report of 1940 Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*, pp. 168-172, Washington: American Educational Research Association, 1940.

³Margaret Mead, *And Keep Your Powder Dry*, William Morrow, New York, 1942, pp. 90-93.

Dangers of Non-Promotion

What is to be gained by retaining children? In his book, *Pupil Progress in the Elementary Schools*, Willard Elsbree⁴ reports that research studies have shown consistently that pupils who repeat grades do little if any better the second time in the grade than they did the first time. He cites the study made by B. T. McKinney at the University of Illinois. McKinney showed that fifty-three percent of the repeaters made no improvement upon being retained and twelve percent did poorer work. While approximately one-third of the repeaters showed some progress, the purpose of non-promotion was scarcely realized by a majority of the repeaters. This conclusion was substantiated by the records of teachers and supervisors in fifty-six counties of Virginia. They reported that the repeaters in those counties did not show any marked improvement in their knowledge of subject matter after repeating the grade.⁵

There is a still deeper reason for considering the matter of retaining children a serious problem. The primary teacher who retains a little immature boy or girl once or twice or three times—and that happens in schools in which retaining children is a common practice—piles up trouble for the upper grades. Do we want fifteen year-old boys and girls with eleven or twelve year-old children in the upper grades?

Boys tend to have more reading problems than girls. We may be causing reading problems when we assume that little boys with like mental ages should be expected to learn to read as early as girls. As yet we have no proof that the eyes of boys do not develop as rapidly as those of girls, but we do find growing among experts in child development the belief that this is true. Pediatricians are slow to attack this problem, perhaps, because no techniques for making the study have been developed. They can X-ray the bony structure and

⁴Willard S. Elsbree, *Pupil Progress in the Elementary School*, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1943, pp. 12-13.

⁵*Annual Report of the Superintendent of Instruction of the Commonwealth of Virginia with Accompanying Documents for the Year 1937-1938*. Board of Education, Richmond, Virginia, p. 16.

find that the skeletons of girls develop more rapidly than do those of boys, but the study of tissues and muscles is more difficult. If we retain boys whose general ability promises success, we may keep them forever from the group with whom they might succeed best—that is, their own social group.

Recognizing Differences

We cause frustration in reading when we set the norm as the standard for all children. The ramifications of the problem thus caused are legion. By standardized tests the norm of children who have been in first or eighth grade nine months is set. But, what percentage of a normal group of children will naturally be below that norm? The norm would not be the norm unless approximately fifty percent of the individuals of a given grade were below that level.

So, we cause frustrations and unfavorable attitudes toward reading when we indicate to children that carrying the average load is expected of all of them. The most serious aspect of thinking in terms of the norm or average is that authors of textbooks write for the norm. We abuse children when we expect all of those of a given grade to be able to use the textbooks written for that grade. Such books fit the individuals of a class to just about the same degree that the average shoe would fit the individual man in the army.

We must remember, also, that the book written for the norm fits the bright child no better than it fits the dull. Cases of retardation in reading among the bright pupils are many. These pupils should become our discussion leaders, but if we give them material too simple to challenge them what have they to discuss?

We fail to meet the reading needs of individuals when we buy large numbers of books of the same kind instead of getting many different books. One important reason for getting many books is to accommodate the different levels of ability. Another is to permit us to include a variety of books—books of travel and adventure and books of fiction. Textbooks are so condensed that they do not supply the child with the food for setting his imagination to work.

Children need enriching detail as background in terms of which to read the textbook. From this point of view, the so-called supplementary book might well be thought of as the textbook. The best single method of improving reading is to act on the principle that children learn to read by reading. To learn to read, then, they need much material which they can read with understanding, with comfort and with zest.

What Kind of Homework?

I wonder if we interfere with progress in reading when we assign homework? If we will follow in our imagination the children to whom we want to assign homework as a means of helping them catch up with their studies, the idea of giving them work to do at home becomes somewhat appalling. Usually the child who seems to need additional work has poor study habits. If he had good study habits he would not need additional work. Should he then be required to study under circumstances which are not conducive to developing good habits of work? Does he have a desk at home, or must he work on the floor or on the kitchen table? Does he have a private room, or does the sticky hand of a baby spoil the paper over which he is laboring? Does he have quietude or must he work where the family is talking? Does he, perchance, live in a noisy, crowded trailer camp? We want to develop the habit of using the dictionary, the atlas, the encyclopedia, and other aids while children study. Does he have access to these tools? Does he have a good light? To require children whose home conditions are not conducive to studying to work at home is to require many children to practice error. All of us can think of pupils to whom we feel inclined to give homework who live under favorable conditions. Should they, however, do more work of the schoolroom type at home, or should they have time for music lessons, for reading the papers, for reading good books, and for doing work natural to the home? I wonder if the school has contributed to that larger problem which we call the breakdown of the American home.

It happens that most of the children to whom we feel inclined

to give homework are poor readers. If they really need additional work, we can require them to do something natural to the home—that is to read material of their own choosing—recreational reading. Of course, we should not forbid children to take books home. To do so might stifle their interest in reading.

Educating Parents

We let go untapped one of our best resources for teaching reading when we fail to include the parents in planning our program. Most of them are "ready" to have their children read as soon as they enter the first grade, whether the children are ready or not. We fail to carry our educational program forward on one of the most important fronts when we fail to have meetings and conferences with parents as a means of informing them of current trends in education. In the same town in the Midwest in which the discussion groups were cancelled while the hatmaking classes were expanded, the PTA held a meeting on making slip covers. There may be a connection between the two episodes. Slip covers are good things, but other groups are organized to teach women how to make slip covers and hats. The school is the only institution organized to help all the parents of all the children with problems related to school life. It is our duty to meet this responsibility.

We interfere with progress in reading when we think of reading as an activity apart from the other phases of the language arts. There is a sequential development in the ability to use our language. The child understands much of our language long before he can reproduce its sounds. He must possess considerable facility in using the language orally before he can get meaning from a page of symbols. He must be able to get meaning from a page of symbols before he can express his own thoughts on a page by using symbols. Faced with the responsibility of teaching large classes and of meeting requirements, we sometimes break this sequence. We break this sequence when we place boys and girls in groups in which oral language does not flow freely. In this fact lies one of the strong arguments against retaining children.

We create frustrating situations when we are inconsistent in our selection of material for children. For years, teachers have grouped children for reading so that each has a book fairly well adapted to his grade level. But, all too often, these same children are expected to use the book written for the average child of the grade all the rest of the day. We may see fourth grade children reading a first or second grade reader during the reading period, then we may see them go into class to use a fourth grade history or arithmetic the following period. Other books written for a given grade are usually more difficult than the reader. If the child cannot read the reader for his grade, he certainly cannot read the other textbooks for his grade.

The Spelling Problem

Perhaps our greatest inconsistency occurs in the teaching of spelling. Let us recall the steps in the sequence of acquiring facility in using our language. The desire and the need to write follows the desire and the need to read. Children feel no need for using in written work words which are not in their speaking vocabularies. Yet, the spelling lists we give children when we follow a series of spelling books require some children to try to spell words which they can neither pronounce nor use. What use do they have for the spelling of these words? Because each author can describe clearly the method of research by which he arrived at his list we tend to attach too much significance to the grade placement of words in a given series of readers and spellers. Betts⁹ found, however, that the authors of seventeen series of spellers for grades two to eight agree on the grade placement of only one word. Surely then there can be no magic in a word list.

Betts gives us a practical suggestion for reducing the spelling load of children when he suggests that we work backwards with children until we find the level at which they can spell, without previous study, seventy-five percent of the words of a list. The

⁹E. A. Betts, "Inter-relationship of Reading and Spelling," *Elementary English*, January, 1945, p. 20.

poorer the speller, the lighter his load should be. The difficulty a child meets in working with words is determined not by the number of times he meets the word but by the probability that the appropriate meaning has been associated with the word. Although Ernest Horn has done much to tighten the grip held on us by graded word lists, he tells us⁷ that "if one uses words from a frequency list, a fourth grade child might be expected to know, 'The square of the sum of two numbers is equal to the square of the first added to twice the product of the first and second added to the square of the second.' He should not know, 'Daddy helped me with my arithmetic until bedtime. I got a bracelet, a toy dresser and some gum for Christmas. Brother got a baseball and a sled.' "

Enriching Vocabulary

Because of the lack of meaning in the words, some are questioning the use of preprimers. The attempt to write a book using only twenty-two different words results in meaningless repetition of empty sounds. A few days ago the mother of a first grade boy told me her child refuses to read the first grade books. She is afraid he will be retained, despite the fact that he has an intelligence quotient of 140. He lies on the floor for hours studying the pictures in the encyclopedia. Such a pupil isn't challenged by a book whose author prides himself on using only twenty-five different words to write a book. What meaning do such books have for children who, according to Seashore,⁸ know about 17,000 words?

We load children too heavily when we take the results on standardized tests alone as the index of a child's reading ability. Most children do their very best when they work on standardized tests. They cannot work long at such tension. If we attempt to have them do so, they get frustrated and discouraged. We need to supplement the diagnosis by taking an informal inventory of reading ability and

⁷Ernest Horn, *Methods of Instruction in the Social Studies*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1937.

⁸Robert H. Seashore, "The Importance of Vocabulary in Learning Language Skills," *Elementary English*, March, 1948, p. 137.

by observing the child's total pattern of behavior. With the permission of the publishers, forms for making such inventory are made available today. Suggestions for making the inventory are given by Betts in his book, *Foundations of Reading Instruction*.⁹

Not only may children become frustrated. Teachers, too, can feel frustrated. Many have twice the number of pupils they should have and half the equipment they should have. The lot of teachers these days is not a happy one. But these are difficult days for parents and for children, too. The air is charged with uncertainty. Wars and rumors of wars, strikes and disasters of various kinds create fear which is reflected in taut nerves and split-second loss of tempers until it seems every man's hand has been turned against his brother. Children are the silent, defenseless victims of this tension. Surely, these are days when children need all the security and understanding the schools can give them. If we can modify our methods in such way as to relieve stress and strain, we may do much more than improve the teaching of reading. The methods we have used in the past have not produced results satisfactory to ourselves or to our critics. Our great inventors have tried other methods when one method failed. To the best of our ability working under the circumstances which confront us, let us do so, too. A few suggestions for doing so are in order.

Improving the Reading Program

1. Let us reconsider our practices calmly and thoughtfully in the light of the findings of research and the sound principles of child development.

2. Let us accept the fact that not all children can learn to read as well as the average. Let us accept the fact that pupils with intelligence quotients in the eighties may never learn to read better than the average fourth grader.

3. Let us take advantage of the modern trend in education. Since eighty percent of our youth of high school age now go to high

⁹E. A. Betts, *Foundations of Reading Instruction*, American Book Company, 1946, pp. 438-481.

school, there is not the reason there was thirty years ago for forcing children into reading or any other phase of work so early. Let us save something for the teachers of the upper years to do.

Let us have faith in the research findings which prove that, in the long run, it is better to postpone reading.

4. Let us act on the principle that children learn to read by reading, that they learn to read as they read. Let us make every experience involving the use of books an experience in reading. Let us practice sound principles of teaching reading whenever we teach science or arithmetic or any subject involving reading. Separate reading periods in which readers are used above the third or fourth grade are considered by many to be unnecessary. If the time of the reading period is given to the content areas and if sound techniques of teaching reading are used in connection with these activities the science or the social studies or the arithmetic or the literature, as well as the reading, stands to benefit thereby.

5. Let us reduce oral reading activities to those occasions in which children have a reason to read orally—during class discussions to prove a point, occasionally to share an anecdote or a story, but, rarely when their classmates are following. Test your friends to see what keeping the place while someone reads aloud does to one's eye movements. Spare the poor reader the embarrassment of reading orally before his group, and always—except when making informal inventories of reading abilities—give children an opportunity to be thoroughly prepared before reading orally.

6. Provide readiness experiences at all levels. Unless children have had experiences which give meaning to symbols, they cannot read. Schools should strive to balance life for children. The more meager the home from which the child comes, the more enriching experiences the school must provide—field trips, at the first grade level or at the eighth grade level, visual aids, experiments, and other interesting activities. At every level, we must take pains to see that children have experiences which give the printed page meaning. Let

Sex Differences in Reading Readiness at the First Grade Level

MARJORIE WIGHT CARROLL¹

Much is said by authorities in the reading field regarding sex differences in the various phases of reading achievement. However, little is said and few facts given in regard to sex differences in reading readiness at the first grade level. It would seem that any sex differences of significance appearing during this preparatory period for reading would be of vital interest to the teacher.

With this in mind, a study was undertaken by the writer to determine whether or not sex differences existed in this preparatory stage. If so, it was assumed that they would logically appear in the results of tests given during this reading readiness period. While many sex differences have been reported by research workers from nursery schools through the secondary schools, this study points out other possible reasons for the existence of sex differences appearing as a result of measurements of achievement or aptitude.

The first part of the present study was concerned with a statistical analysis of data compiled in the Brown² survey. The results of her study gave the total mixed scores of over 500 children on the Stone and Grover Classification Test for Beginners in Reading.³ This test was given in eighteen different schools. These 500 odd scores were separated according to sex, yielding scores for 245 girls and 277 boys on the first part of the test. The second part included scores for 251 girls and 273 boys. In this purely visual test, the results were found to be slightly in favor of the girls in the first part, whereas the minor

¹New Haven State Teachers College, New Haven, Conn.

²Brown, Zeta I., unpublished survey, Boston University.

³Stone and Grover, *Classification Test for Beginners in Reading*, Webster Publishing Co.

differences appearing in the second part were in favor of the boys. However, in neither case were there statistically significant differences.

From the above study, scores on the Gates Primary Reading Tests⁴ for 414 of the same children were statistically analyzed according to sex. These tests were administered at the end of the school year. Absences and withdrawals accounted for the decrease in the number of cases in both sexes. 211 of the scores were for girls and 203 for boys. The results evidenced a significant difference in favor of the girls in their Reading Grade Total. They showed a difference in mean scores of 1.47, or over ten times the standard error of the difference.

This survey included scores made by 226 girls and 274 boys in a measurement of their ability to name letters. The results were slightly in favor of the girls, although not statistically significant.

The second and third parts of this study used scores from the Monroe Reading Aptitude Test.⁵ The Monroe tests were given to 82 children in two schools in the same town. Of these, 46 were girls and 36 boys. In the visual, motor, and language measurements, there appeared no significant sex difference. The existing differences were in favor of the girls. The results of the Auditory tests showed a difference in mean scores of 3.36 with a critical ratio of 2.75. In articulation also, the results were in favor of the girls, with a superiority in mean score of 8.79, which showed a critical ratio of 2.81.

The results of the second Monroe Study were obtained from a statistical analysis of scores for nearly 185 children. These, likewise, were separated into scores for 90 girls and 95 boys. All the differences were in favor of the girls. Although the differences fell short of statistical significance, the girls proved superior to the boys in auditory discrimination and articulation in both Monroe studies.

⁴Gates Primary Tests (1-2-3).

⁵*Monroe Reading Aptitude Tests*, Primary Form, Houghton Mifflin Co., The Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass.

For the fourth part of this entire study, a statistical analysis was made of approximately 333 scores on the first five composite tests of the *Gates Jim and Judy* tests;⁶ 248 scores on the sixth part of this same test; and 59 scores on the seventh part of this test.

Included in tests one and two were scores for 145 girls and 189 boys. Tests three, four, and five included scores for 146 girls and 188 boys. The scores for test six included those for 112 boys and 106 girls. For test seven there were comparatively few scores secured; there being 24 for girls and 35 for boys. No scores were obtained for test eight.

There were no significant sex differences in parts one (auditory-visual), two (word matching), four (auditory-visual), five (visual), six (reading letters), and seven (sounding letters). It was very apparent, however, that the sex differences in part three were statistically significant and in favor of the girls. In this measurement of visual perception, the difference between the mean scores was 4.05—almost eight times the standard error of the difference.

The fifth and sixth part of this study dealt with scores obtained from the results of an unpublished test by Dearborn and Cushman.⁷ Included were scores for 211 children; 101 of the scores for girls and 110 for boys.

Differences in Parts I, II, and VII were in favor of the girls. The differences were present in the results of measurements of auditory and visual aspects of reading readiness. In Part V, which deals with visual acuity, the girls evidenced superiority over the boys. The difference was 1.92 or over three times the standard error of the difference.

The second analysis of results of scores made by the same 211 children on the second form of this test showed that the differences

⁶*The New Work-Play Standardized Readiness Tests*, p. i-vi of the Preparatory Book accompanying the Primer, Arthur I. Gates, The Macmillan Company.

⁷Dearborn, Walter F., and Cushman, Marion B., *Ready-to-Read Games*. Graduate School of Education, Harvard University (unpublished).

evidenced by boys in Parts I (auditory) and II (visual) were statistically less than those appearing for the girls in the same parts of the first study. In Part III (visual), the girls showed a slight gain over the boys in part III of the first study. In Part VIII (Visual), the difference was in favor of the girls, whereas in the same part of the first study it was in favor of the boys. The nearest approach to statistical significance in this study is made by the girls in part V which is a visual measurement. In the first study, statistical significance was evident here, in favor of the girls.

The conclusions reached in this study are found in the accompanying table. It will be noticed that all significant differences are in favor of the girls; that of the critical differences of 2.0-2.9, four items favor the girls as compared to one for the boys. Of all the tests, twenty-four favor the girls as compared to fourteen for the boys.

Statistically significant sex differences were shown by this study to appear during the reading readiness period. Since they existed be-

Table of Critical Difference

	Girls Superior to Boys	Boys Superior to Girls
Crit. diff. 3.0 or more	Reading Achievement (Brown)	None
	Visual Discrimination (Gates)	
	Visual Discrimination (Dearborn-Cushman- First Study)	
Crit. diff. 2.0-2.9	Auditory (Monroe-First Study)	Visual Discrimination (Dearborn-Cushman- Second Study)
	Articulation (Monroe- First Study)	
	Articulation (Monroe- Second Study)	
	Visual Discrimination (Dearborn-Cushman- Second Study)	

Table of Critical Difference Con't.

	Girls Superior to Boys	Boys Superior to Girls
Crit. diff. 1.0-.19	Visual Discrimination (Monroe-First Study)	Auditory-Visual (Gates)
	Motor (Monroe-First study)	Auditory-Visual (Gates)
	Language (Monroe-First study)	Auditory-Visual (Gates)
	Auditory (Monroe- Second study)	Visual Discrimination (Dearborn-Cushman- Second Study)
	Motor (Monroe-Second study)	
	Language (Monroe- Second study)	
	Visual Discrimination (Gates)	
	Auditory (Dearborn- Cushman First study)	
	Visual Discrimination (Dearborn-Cushman First study)	
	Visual Discrimination (Dearborn-Cushman- First study)	
	Visual Discrimination (Dearborn-Cushman- Second study)	
Crit diff. 0-.9	Visual Discrimination (Brown)	Visual Discrimination (Brown)
	Letters Named (Brown)	Reading Readiness Total (Brown) (Visual)
	Visual Discrimination (Monroe-Second study)	Sounding Letters (Gates)
	Letters Read (Gates)	Visual Discrimination (Dearborn-Cushman- First study)
	Visual Discrimination (Dearborn-Cushman- First Study)	Visual Discrimination (Dearborn-Cushman- First Study)
	Visual Discrimination (Dearborn-Cushman- Second Study)	Visual Discrimination (Dearborn-Cushman- First study)
	Visual (Monroe-Second study)	

Table of Critical Difference Con't.

Girls Superior to Boys	Boys Superior to Girls
	Auditory (Dearborn-Cushman Second study)
	Visual Discrimination (Dearborn-Cushman-Second study)
	Visual Discrimination (Dearborn-Cushman-Second study)

fore formal teaching took place, it is reasonable to believe that such differences that might appear later in any measurement of achievement or aptitude might be due to reading readiness factors alone.

In view of the findings in this study which included approximately 1100 children, there are certain areas for further research that come to mind. Therefore, it seems pertinent to suggest further research at this level in connection with this limited study:

1. To make a further investigation into visual and auditory measurements of reading readiness in order to ascertain whether or not significant sex differences are apparent in other forms of measurement of these same aspects.
2. To make a study of sex differences by pairing the study group according to chronological age, mental age, background of experience, and language background.
3. To study the progress of a group of children wherein significant sex differences are apparent during the reading readiness stage to ascertain whether or not the same conditions are true at various stages in development of the same group of children.

The National Council of Teachers of English¹

Elected to the Elementary Section in the spring of 1948 to take office immediately *after the 1948 convention*:

Alvina Treut Burrows, Instructor in Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education, School of Education, New York University

Helen K. Mackintosh, Specialist for Upper Grades, Division of Elementary Education, United States Office of Education

Holdover members of the Elementary Section:

Ruth Strickland, Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind. (1949) (Chairman 1948-49)

Bernice E. Leary, Madison Public School, Madison, Wis. (1949)

Lillian Paukner, Board of Education, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (1950)

Mabel F. Rice, Whittier College, Whittier, Calif. (1950)

Martha Seeling, Wheelock College, Boston 15, Mass. (1949)

Elected to the Board of Directors in the spring of 1948 to take office immediately *before the convention in 1948*:

Althea Beery, Supervisor of Primary Grades, Cincinnati Public Schools

Constance M. McCullough, San Francisco State College, San Francisco, Calif.

Holdover members of the Board of Directors representing the Elementary Section:

Rosana Davis, Hotel Munger, San Antonio, Tex.

Ethel Mitchell, 1105 Ninth Street, Greeley, Colo.

Helen Mackintosh, United States Office of Education, Washington, D. C.

¹See advertising section for the announcement of the Annual Convention.

Mrs. Bernice Skeen, Western Washington College of Education, Bellingham, Washington

Jennie Campbell, State Director of Elementary Education, Salt Lake City, Utah

Alvina Treut Burrows, Department of Early Childhood and Elementary School Education, School of Education, New York University, New York, N. Y.

The National Council of Teachers of English was one of twenty-eight national organizations represented on May 20-22 at a conference in Washington, called by the Office of Education, on Leadership in Elementary Education. Among the larger problems discussed were the following: What is elementary education at its best? How can the problems and situations which are most real and important to children be identified? What are the next steps in working together as organizations to secure better education for children of elementary school age? How can adequate financial support be secured in each community for good elementary schools?

The point of view of those attending this conference was in close agreement with that of the Curriculum Commission of the National Council, especially with reference to what constitutes a good elementary school. Among the statements adopted by the conference regarding such a school were the following: "It is a coöperative responsibility of home, school, and community." "Its philosophy is based on the belief that education is most effective when it centers on the child growing up in the culture of the community. Its curriculum grows out of the children's needs, problems, and experiences." It selects and organizes the subject matter which is needed and which is appropriate to the growth levels of children using it." "It emphasizes active experiencing as the means of learning." "It believes that democratic citizenship is achieved through practice in democratic living."

Definite recommendations were adopted by the conference for planning and for developing needed leadership in elementary education at the local, county, state, and national levels. It was proposed that similar conferences be held of representatives of all organizations interested in better education for elementary school children at each of these levels. Teachers of English in all parts of the country should be ready to cooperate in such joint planning conferences.

M. R. Trabue

The Educational Scene

Gertrude Hildreth, a recent contributor to *Elementary English*, has published an excellent article in the *Elementary School Journal* (June, 1948) on the "Interrelationships among the Language Arts." Among her recommendations for the achievement of better integration in the teaching of the language arts are the following: (1) Provide a basis of learning experiences which give real meaning and purpose to language expression, something for children to think about, talk about, read and write about that is allied to their concerns in daily living. (2) Make use of pictures, recordings, radio, and any other graphic or auditory resources that enhance the language aspects of the studies. (3) Build up the child's oral expression as a basis for instruction in reading and writing. (4) Spend most of the time usually given to drill in reading mechanics to thought-getting experiences and language activities. (5) Create more opportunities in the entire life of the school for the children to use language skills. Miss Hildreth makes numerous other practical recommendations for the integration of language arts instruction.

Dr. Edgar Dale, writing in the

May, 1948, issue of *The News Letter*, provides valuable suggestions for teaching youth how to give directions. Under the title, "Clear Only If Known," the article sets forth the tendency of most people to assume too much knowledge on the part of the listener. "You can't miss it" often really means, "I can't miss it." Specific, concrete information given with the needs of the listener in mind is essential. On the other hand, irrelevant and gratuitous facts may distract the listener. *The News Letter* is published by the Bureau of Educational Research, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

Several years ago Dr. Willard C. Olsen insisted that a child's growth should be evaluated in terms of several measures of maturation instead of I Q and reading age alone. Now Dr. Ralph W. House, writing in the September, 1947, issue of the *Journal of Educational Research*, reports on his study of five retarded readers and concludes with the recommendation that teachers investigate the general pattern of growth of children who are retarded in school work. He recommends especially the following maturity ages as easily measurable: height age, weight age, dental age,

and muscle-tone age. These should of course supplement mental age and reading age.

One of the most rewarding and many-sided types of language activity in or out of school is the interview. Louise R. Glover, writing in the February, 1948, *English Journal*, provides a wealth of suggestions for its use. She lists 15 types of interviews feasible in any locality, and asserts that pupils will extend the list indefinitely. Included in Miss Glover's list are the following: government officials, editors, employment agencies, police officers, heads of community organizations, managers of concert bureaus, officers of unions, officers of the Junior League, heads of departments in stores, librarians, art curators, and foreign visitors.

Another in the excellent series of bulletins published by the Board of Education of the City of New York is entitled *Practices and Problems in Handwriting*. The document, which appears to be a fairly comprehensive treatment of the subject, was prepared by the Division of Curriculum Research, Margaret B. Parbe, research assistant, and William H. Bristow, assistant director.

An interdepartmental Committee on Children and Youth has been formed at the request of the Presi-

dent for the purpose of planning the 1950 White House Conference on Children and Youth. The purpose of the Conference is to help states and local communities to plan and carry through programs "that will assure youngsters a fair start and an even chance in life."

The entire issue of *Education* for June, 1948 is devoted to the teaching of reading. Dr. Emmett A. Betts is Special Editor.

A new line of handsomely designed and produced juveniles, to be known as Falcon books, will be published September 25. Eight are intended for boys, while four are for girls—all in the 10 to 15 age bracket. Price, 50c each.

Here are the Junior Literary Guild selections for the month of October, 1948: for boys and girls 6, 7, and 8 years of age, *Robbott: A Tale of Tails*, written and illustrated by Robert Lawson. Viking Press, \$2.50; for boys and girls 9, 10, and 11 years of age, *Wish on an Apple* by Shannon Garst. Abingdon-Cokesbury, \$2.00; for older girls, 12 to 16 years of age, *Seven Beaver Skins* written and illustrated by Erick Berry John C. Winston, \$2.50; for older boys, 12 to 16 years of age, *Gentlemen, Hush!* by Jere Wheelwright. Scribner's, \$2.50.

Look and Listen

By LILLIAN NOVOTNY¹

Radio and Television

The question, "Can an individual school, not a part of any larger unit, successfully operate an educational station?" which has been in the minds of many educators, has been answered in the affirmative by Sewanhaka High School's FM Station's first year of successful operation. According to a report in a recent *FREC Service Bulletin*, this high school in Floral Park, New York, faced four basic problems: first, can it be done? Second, can a surrounding elementary district be served even though the two are not component parts in a single system? Third, can a staff, finances, and facilities be maintained? Fourth, can shortages in equipment, receivers, and familiarity with studio techniques be overcome?

According to Worthington A. Gregory, station manager, the year, in retrospect, is not spectacular; but progress has been steady, and it is possible to realize that a solid foundation has been laid upon which future development of the station may safely rest. Sewanhaka is a central high school of 3,400 students that is an educational unit separate from the ten elementary schools in seven districts which it serves.

The answer to the second problem, which arose from the first, is now clear: operational policies are based upon service to surrounding institutions in the area.

In answer to the third problem, manager Gregory said, "While this problem is real and ever-present, it can be solved through careful planning and full utilization of existing facilities. We are blessed with a staff that, although small, is extremely versatile, and future additions can be by our present members."

The fourth problem, which is familiar to all FM stations, was solved in much the same way. The experience gained by the students in writing, installation of equipment, building of supplementary equipment, as well as in serving as control room engineers, announcers, and writers has been invaluable.

Twelve different series of programs, ranging from kindergarten through senior high school, have been offered weekly for classroom listening. Experienced broadcasters like Betty Girling, Minnesota School of the Air, George Jennings, Chicago

¹A teacher in the Chicago Public Schools, and member of the Council's Committee on Radio.

Radio Council, Edwin Helman, Cleveland Board of Education Station, as well as the Script and Transcription Exchange of the U.S. Office of Education, have assisted in contributing worthwhile instructional materials for classroom use. Committees of elementary and high school teachers presently are developing new series based on local curriculum needs for use this fall.

Late afternoon broadcasts with varied programs in music, entertainment, and news, have been planned for a general adult audience; and plans are under way to greatly expand the scope of interest for adult listeners during the coming year. Future plans also include a comprehensive teacher training program in the proper utilization of the broadcasts for classroom use.

Each Saturday, a magic carpet is provided for NBC listeners who wish to visit the famed Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado via the weekly *Nature Sketches* broadcast. This series is conducted by a park naturalist who takes a group of children to various spots of interest within the area and discusses with them the flowers, the trees, and the wild creatures in their natural habitat. Forest conservation and care of our wild life are emphasized as the children talk about these wonders of nature; and a

visit to the Natural History Museum before and after the broadcast provides them with scientific data to amplify their findings during the field trips. It is a delightful program, highly recommended for listening by children as well as adults.

The first documentary in television history, a comprehensive examination of all phases of the European Recovery Program, titled *The Marshall Plan: A First Report*, will be produced by the American Broadcasting Company this fall on three continents: Europe, North America, and South America. This will combine live production and extensive use of specially prepared films made with the assistance of the International Film Foundation. The European portion of the films, designed to show the actual operation of the Marshall Plan on a wide range of levels in the sixteen European countries joined in the Economic Cooperation Administration, now are being filmed throughout the continent by a special crew headed by Julien Bryan, author, lecturer, and executive director of the International Film Foundation.

An additional item of interest in connection with television and its part in developing international understanding is news of an exchange of television films covering news, special events, and regular entertainment

programs between Radio-diffusion Francaise and the American Broadcasting Company. Radio-diffusion is to send ABC half-hour films depicting all aspects of French cultural, educational, and economic life to assist Americans in a better understanding of the current problems affecting France. In return, ABC will send France television films covering similar activities in the United States.

Films

From the Motion Picture Association, 1600 Eye Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C., comes news of three new teaching films, products of a co-operative experiment by textbook publishers and the motion picture industry, which are now available to schools and educational groups.

Roger Albright, Director of Educational Services of the Motion Picture Association, said the films, which were produced specifically for classroom use, are aimed at leveling off recognized "stumbling blocks" in teaching.

What's Happening in Hollywood has summarized summer releases of unusual interest and points out a trend toward classic and standard literature. M-GM is completing *The Three Musketeers* in technicolor, while Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, John Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga*,

and Edith Wharton's *Age of Innocence* have been in production. Columbia's production schedule included *The Loves of Carmen*, *The Black Pirate* by Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Best Man Wins*, based on Mark Twain's "The Celebrated Frog of Calaveras County," and a sea picture based on Longfellow's *Wreck of the Hesperus*. Paramount had its musical version of Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. RKO had in preparation a picturization of Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* to be filmed in color in England. The Edward Small Company filmed *Cagliostro* in Italy with Orson Welles in the title role of the screenplay adapted from historical facts and incidents in the writings of Alexandre Dumas. This was returned to Hollywood for finishing touches on the picture. Mr. Small plans to film *Lorna Doone* in England, and has his writers at work on the *Leatherstocking Tales* as an important contribution to the screen's Americana. Columbia has a much-discussed picture in *The Lost One (La Traviata)*.

Warners have completed Wilkie Collins' famous old mystery story of a hundred years ago, *The Woman in White*, and have assigned to Henry Blanke the filming of *Moby Dick* and *Ethan Frome*. Twentieth Century-Fox has unusual imports in *Anna Karenina*, and Galsworthy's *Escape*.

Olivier's *Hamlet* and Orson Welles' *Macbeth* are two additional releases that are anticipated with great interest.

Encyclopaedia Britannica Films, Inc., 1150 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois, have announced the release of the following films:

Autumn on the Farm, third in a series of color films on the Seasons, covers a period of three months: September, October, and November. This film uses the same locale shown in the two previous films of this series, *Spring on the Farm*, and *Summer on the Farm*. Like the others, it is designed to give school children an idea of how life on a farm is lived. It shows a one-family farm in southern Wisconsin with a diversified agricultural program. The farm is neat and moderately prosperous. The Wisconsin location was chosen because it was situated in a latitude where there are definite seasonal changes.

Sales price for the one reel color film is \$90, while it is available for rental at \$4 for one, two, or three days.

"The Living Earth" series, four new color 16 mm films on the vital problem of the conservation of mankind's soil resources, was filmed to create a widespread awareness of one of the world's most pressing problems

—the wasting away of land through faulty conservation. The four motion pictures were produced by the Conservation Foundation in association with the New York Zoological Society. George E. Brewer Jr. of the Foundation was in charge of their production.

The four color films are for sale for \$90 each reel. They are also available for rental from most educational film libraries or from EB Films five rental libraries at:

30 Huntington Avenue, Boston 16, Massachusetts; 450 West 56th Street, New York 19, New York; 207 South Green Street, Chicago 7, Illinois; 712 North Haskell Street, Dallas 1, Texas; 1640 East Mountain Street, Pasadena 7, California.

French Children, latest film produced in the EBF series on *Children of Many Lands*, was photographed on a farm in Brittany near the quaint old town of Dinan. Like other films in the series, *French Children* is organized around family living, giving maximum opportunity to present the subject in its most meaningful context to children. Although this film is designed basically for use in primary and elementary grades social studies, it will be found equally useful for providing common experiences as a basis for reading, discussion, and other expression activities.

Sale price for the one reel sound film is \$45.00, while it is available for rental at \$2.50 for one, two, or three days.

Where Will You Hide poses the question of what will happen in another war when atomic bombs, bacteriological warfare, germs, or still unpublicized weapons of mass destruction rain down on cities in a possible future conflict of the Powers.

The idea for this film originated in the discussions of the Los Alamos scientists and crystallized into the twenty-minute color film. Made up of animations and thunderingly dramatic paintings, the motion picture reveals graphically what would happen if another war should come. The myth that the United States is sole possessor of the atomic bomb is shattered when the narrator in the film points out that nature is the true possessor of the secret, and that she is not partial to Americans. Furthermore, the film points out, scientists do not even know of any field of study which could hold adequate hope of evolving a defense.

The possibilities of other types of weapons, even more deadly in their ability to create mass destruction are also portrayed emphatically in the film.

Where Will You Hide was produced for the Audiographic Institute

by Edward Levitt and W. Bradford Shank, himself a former Los Alamos atomic scientist. Rip Van Ronkel served as director of narration, and the narrators are Jim Backus, Edmund Penney, and Lou Marcelle. Photography was done by Glen E. Shank, while the sound script represents the combined talents of Douglas Morrow, Dr. Robert Pettengill of George Pepperdine College, and Bradford Shank.

Encyclopedia Britannica Films is distributing the film to schools, colleges and universities, service organizations, churches, and discussion groups of every kind as a public service to provide Americans with a shocking but effective analysis of the great problem of war or peace.

It is for sale from EB Films, Wilmette, Illinois, and will be made available for rental by university and commercial film libraries and by EBF's five regional libraries.

Recordings

The Adventures of Oliver Twist and Fagin, selected from Charles Dickens and adapted by Ralph Rose. 3-12" records. \$4.60, Columbia.

Episodes from Dickens' "Oliver Twist," with Basil Rathbone as Fagin and Narrator. An able cast.

Alice in Wonderland, adapted from Lewis Carroll by Ralph Rose. 4-12" records. \$5.95. Columbia.

A music-drama treatment of the beloved classic, starring Jane Powell, and featuring original music by Carmen Dragon. Famous scenes are included.

Bongo, by Sinclair Lewis, adapted by Ralph Rose. 3-10" records. \$3.00. Columbia.

Narrated by Dinah Shore, supported by an orchestra under the direction of Sunny Burke.

Kankie and the Concertina, Cyril von Bauman—Fred Essex. 2-10" records. \$1.75. Columbia.

Narrated by David Allen, with background music composed and conducted by Charles Hale.

Transcriptions

An April supplement to the *Catalog of Radio Recordings* is now available through the Educational Radio Script and Transcription Exchange, U. S. Office of Education, Washington 25, D. C.

Recorded programs which include such fields as conservation and natural science, literature and speech, health, welfare, and safety, social studies, tales of the foreign service, and special programs, are available on loan through the script and transcription exchange. They are all on sixteen-inch discs, and require special playback equipment having a turntable speed of 33 1/3 RPM.

The customary loan service is two weeks. There is no expense to the borrower except the cost of return postage.

The May-June *FREC Service Bulletin* announced two recorded programs from the Treasury "Guest Star" series which have been added to the Exchange and are now available on loan. They are 15 minutes in length and are recorded at 33 1/3 RPM.

The Devil and Daniel Webster is a dramatization based on a scene from Stephen Vincent Benet's well-known story of how a New England farmer yielded to temptation and was saved from dire consequences by the inspiring advice of Daniel Webster. Edward Arnold, motion picture star, is the featured "guest star."

Great Grandfather of Liberty is a short story about John Washington, the great-grandfather of George Washington, whose search for freedom and his willingness to face hardships in a new land made his name immortal. Sir Cedric Hardwicke is the "guest star."

Report Card, the one-hour documentary broadcast recently by CBS, has been cleared and is in process of being recorded for loan distribution through the Exchange. Program covers a broad survey of education in the United States, pointing up the need for new, dynamic concepts link-

ing the classroom to life's realistic needs. Permissions are restricted to off-the-air use.

Equipment

The Educational Products Division, Freed Radio Corporation, 200 Hudson Street, New York 13, New York, has announced the production of a new FM-AM radio designed especially for classroom use with the advice and collaboration of educational authorities. Known as the Freed-Eisemann Educator, the new receiver incorporates 10 tubes plus a rectifier and a cathode ray tuning "eye." It features a special Armstrong FM receiving circuit and a high fidelity speaker with a range of 100 to 15,000 cycles. It produces an undistorted 5-watt output.

The new receiver meets every requirement for effective school use: portability, sturdy construction, and ease of tuning. It contains built-in antennas and provision is made for attachment of outside antennas where required. It is sold directly to educational institutions to eliminate wholesale and retail distribution costs and is not obtainable through ordinary trade channels. An interesting booklet defining standards for effective classroom listening and describing the Freed-Eisemann Educator is available from the above address.

Broadcasting Program Service,

425 Fifth Avenue, New York City 16, announces the production of the "Califone Portable," an inexpensive lightweight transcription player. The machine, which weighs only 10 pounds, is especially designed to play transcriptions up to 17¼" at 33 1/3 RPM as well as standard records at 78 RPM. A new principle eliminates needle "talk," and the constant speed turntable is completely silent in operation. A wide range amplifier, a 6" heavy duty speaker mounted in the lid, and low needle pressure are additional features. It comes in a rugged "Cal-Ex" case with non-scuffable finish. A special model is available for school use over a projector amplifier or a built-in sound system.

The Victor Animatograph Corporation, Davenport, Iowa, has announced a completely new dual-speed record player, the *Sonomaster*, which is described as the ultimate in record-playing equipment for the institutional market.

The new GE variable reluctance high fidelity (magnetic) pickup which is wholly unaffected by changes in temperature and humidity is one of the technical features. It is equipped with a natural sapphire stylus which is soft-spring mounted and operates with only one-ounce pressure. This new instrument will reproduce records up to 16" diameter

at either 33 1/3 or 78 RPM. It is a completely self-contained instrument with its own powerful amplifier and speaker. The amplifier is a four-stage, six-tube unit, including rectifier. Power output is 14 watts, and the amplifier has separate channels for microphone and phonograph. In addition to its record-playing, this machine is also an efficient public address system.

A 10-inch heavy duty permanent magnet dynamic speaker (25-watt capacity), with remarkable fidelity of performance on both speech and music at all volume settings, has been expressly designed for the *Sonomaster*. The new instrument operates on 50-cycle, 110-120-130 volt AC. The outside dimensions of its beautifully finished case are 22½" long, 16½" wide, and 11" high. It weighs 40 pounds.

An unusual feature of this instrument is that it is adaptable to the pickup and amplification of special FM educational programs which are being broadcast by a rapidly growing list of radio stations. A special optional FM tuner, the Browning Tuner, produced by Browning Laboratories, Inc., is being offered as an accessory for this purpose.

Descriptive literature may be obtained from all Victor representatives, or from the above address.

General

A glass-saving and anti-vandalism campaign in the Chicago public schools is serving a dual purpose: not only have public school buildings as well as city and private property benefited as a result of the concerted effort, but schools will benefit in the form of audio-visual equipment which is to be given in the form of prizes to those schools with the best 1948 record.

To the one elementary school with the outstanding record for the year are to be given: a brush tape recorder, a portable play-back, a sound-on-film 16 mm projector, an AM-FM Educator Model radio receiver, as well as \$125. worth of library books. The ten leading schools of each district (and there are 10 districts, making a total of 100 schools) will each receive the Sound-on-Film 16 mm projector, the portable playback, the AM-FM Educator Model Radio Receiver, and \$125. worth of library books. Similar prizes are to be given to the outstanding high school and to the five leading high schools of each one of the five high school districts. These, together with prizes for larger and smaller elementary schools, plus rewards for the greatest percent of reduction in window breakage and vandalism, will make Chicago schools richer by 2 brush tape recorders; 127

portable playbacks; 127 sound-on-film projectors; 355 AM-FM Educator model radio receivers; and approximately \$38,000 worth of books to be selected by committees of pupils within the winning schools.

VERSE AND SONG FOR DEMOCRATIZATION

(Continued from Page 343)

principles of democratic living contained in these forms, which he has experienced and will continue to put into practise as he matures.

Other Songs That Have Been Used Successfully

1. "How Do You Do, My Partner." *Songs For Little Children*, Board of Education, Chicago, Ill. (Change the word "partner" to "neighbor.")
2. "Friends," *Tuning Up*. Ginn. Page 97.
3. "My Country." *Tuning Up*. Ginn. Page 160.

The foregoing songs are recommended for first grade.

4. *Songs Of Friendship*. Irving Caesar. (New York). Grade 2 and up.
5. *Little Songs On Big Subjects*. Argosy Music Corporation (New York). Grade 3 and up. These songs may also be had on recordings.
6. "The Good Neighbor Song." By Sema W. Herman. *The American Teacher*, April 1948. (Or send to author for leaflet.) Grade 1 up.

"A World Of Neighbors." Poem. By Sema W. Herman. Soon to be published by the *American Junior Red Cross Magazine*. Grade 1 up.

Review and Criticism

[The brief reviews in this issue were written by Hannah M. Lindahl, Dorothy E. Smith, Jean Gardiner Smith, Bernardine G. Schmidt, Mary C. Wilson, and Celia B. Stendler. Unsigned annotations are by the editor.]

For the Teacher

The Teaching of English in Wisconsin. By Robert C. Pooley and Robert D. Williams. The University of Wisconsin Press, \$3.75.

A report described as "a survey of the methods and materials of instruction and of teaching personnel in the elementary and secondary schools, 1944-1945." Completed in 1945, though published in 1948, the excellent report has not lost its timeliness in spite of a number of significant changes that have occurred in the last three years, particularly with regard to teacher supply and teacher salaries. All of the basic data relative to teaching content and procedures are no doubt as valid today as in 1945, and the Wisconsin pattern as here described probably applies in essential respects to the nation as a whole. Some readers may quarrel with certain of the recommendations, but in general the interpretation of the findings harmonizes with the best current thinking in the

field of the teaching of English. Dr. Pooley has written the section dealing with the secondary level; Dr. Williams that dealing with the elementary level. Apparently little progress in the teaching of English has been made since the time of Dr. Dora Smith's New York survey made several years earlier.

Radio in Elementary Education. By Roy DeVerl Willey and Helen Ann Young. Heath, \$3.50.

This valuable addition to the rapidly growing literature on education by radio is the result of extensive, painstaking research. Designed primarily for the prospective elementary school teacher, it contains a wealth of practical material for all teachers and supervisors interested in elementary or junior high school education. The uses of radio in the language arts, creative arts, the social studies, and science are elaborately described. Standards for critical listening outside of school are discussed along with "educational" radio.

Radio, Motion Picture, and Reading Interests. A Study of High School Pupils. By Alice P. Sterner. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, \$2.10. A careful analysis of the inter-re-

lationships among adolescent interests in the various mass media. Love, adventure, and humor lead among the interests, independently of the media.

Handbook for Remedial Reading. By William Kottmeyer. Webster Publishing Co., (St. Louis). \$1.75.

In the introductory chapter, Dr. Kottmeyer states his threefold purpose for writing this book for middle-and upper-grade teachers: to present a brief review of some background information, to establish a sequence of developmental reading skills, and to suggest ways for helping retarded readers and differentiating reading instruction in a large classroom.

A major discussion and one of the strongest of the volume is found in the chapter devoted to the problem of diagnosing reading disabilities. Suggested forms are presented for recording graphically those facts which have bearing upon an individual's reading progress. An explanation of how to interpret and utilize the results of diagnostic tests is provided. There is also a helpful description of how to check the necessary word-analysis skills through the use of teacher-made materials.

Suggestions for individual remedial reading are based on sound psychological principles. The descrip-

tion of procedures for word-analysis instruction would be helpful for teachers of usual pupils in the primary grades as well as for teachers of upper-elementary pupils who have reading disabilities.

A recurring theme of the book is differentiation of classroom instruction. A cogent and graphic explanation of classroom management in providing for the varying and changing needs of individual pupils is presented. Teachers who have difficulty in breaking from the use of identical textbooks and uniform procedure in a class would do well to read this chapter carefully. Many teachers would prefer not to use pupils in the role of pupil-teachers. Few teachers would find it necessary to resort to commercial practice materials to the extent that is proposed.

The format of the book is pleasing. M. C. W.

For Early Adolescents

Good Field, No Hit. By Duane Decker. M. S. Mill, \$2.50.

An exciting story of a bush leaguer who finally gets his chance with a major league ball club. Here he encounters jealousy, underhand tactics, and organized heckling. Bolstered by the faith of his kid brother and a wise sports writer, he makes the grade. For all boys who like baseball and clean sport. D. E. S.

Mountain Tamer. By Arthur D. Stapp. William Morrow, \$2.50.

There is much in this book to commend it to the adolescent. The story is about a boy in high school, Bob Moore, who is afraid of heights but who determines to conquer his fear. He joins the Climbers Club, and, with the group, he takes long hikes up the mountainside. There are dangers to be faced and fears to be fought. But in the end, Bob reveals his mastery over self through the thrilling part which he plays in rescuing two boys.

The author portrays the beauty of mountains, of lakes, of clouds, and of stars. To the boy or girl who feels the fascination of lofty peaks and mountain trails, this book will be especially satisfying. H. M. L.

Victorious Island. By Henrietta Vander Haas. Drawings by Gerard Hordyk. Harcourt, Brace, \$2.00.

This is a grim and gallant story of Walchuren Island during the Nazi occupation of Holland in World War II. There is the temporarily broken mother who did everything the arrogant Nazis ordered until one of them cuffed her son; there are the boys doing men's work all day, and acting as spies at night; there are children pretending to be dumb and bedeviling their oppressors; there is the courageous Granny who hid the

best of her household goods in a secret cupboard, gave haven to a wounded patriot, held back food from the Nazis so as to share it with her own people. When the dikes were bombed by the allies to provide passage to Antwerp from the North Sea, she knew she wouldn't live to see the land recover from the salt water that submerged it, but she continued to live up to the Zeeland motto, "We struggle and emerge." It is a reassuring story of stubborn courage and enduring faith. D. E. S.

A Three-Two Pitch. A Bronc Burnett Story. By Wilfred McCormick Putman, \$2.00.

The first of a series of five baseball stories for teen-agers.

Beany Malone. By Lenora Mattingly Weber. Thomas Y. Crowell, \$2.50.

Here is a book for junior and senior high readers that will interest many adults as well. It's the story of a family of Malones, who suffer the inevitable hurts that come to all persons who seek to do the things they believe need doing. Beany Malone, the young, serious teen-ager, finds many occasions to question the wisdom of their pattern of active living, and frequently longs for the brittle, glittering safety of the families who "let things be." But it's a full, gay story of real excitement and under-

standing that helps Beany see the ultimate usefulness of their way of living. Written by an author whose insights strike deep, characters are portrayed with rare vividness and understanding, and the real significance of emotional maturity is accurately and interestingly portrayed. B. G. S.

For the Middle Grades

Go West, Young Bear. By Elizabeth Hamilton. Illustrated by Kurt Wiese. Coward-McCann, \$2.50.

This amusing, adventurous tale of two bears, Charles and his Uncle Horace, will interest children in the middle grades. Nonsense, humor, alliteration, and a play on words characterize the telling of the story. In some instances, the latter is too subtle to be understood and appreciated by children.

Charles lives with his mother, father, and Uncle Horace in Canada. The young bear and his uncle decide to go to Yellowstone Park where people are friendly to bears. Their many adventures on their trip to the West make a lively tale.

Kurt Wiese's illustrations add charm to the book. H. M. L.

More Tales From Grimm. Translated and illustrated by Wanda Gag. Coward-McCann.

Joy in these expertly told and

gaily illustrated tales is clouded by the knowledge that it is Wanda Gag's last book. She died before completing all of the illustrations. She left a rich heritage to children's literature, beginning with her first book, *Millions of Cats*, which is even now recognized as a classic. All four of her books of translations from Grimm are exceptionally good. They show perfect rapport between author and illustrator for as she translated each tale, Wanda Gag the artist made rough pencil sketches of the incidents she wished to illustrate. D. E. S.

Gay, a Shetland Sheepdog. By Margaret S. Johnson. Illustrated by the author. William Morrow, \$2.00.

In the lists of favorite books, animal stories rank high with young children. Therefore, this tale of a Shetland sheepdog will be welcomed by boys and girls of ages ranging from eight to ten.

Gay is not a good sheepdog although she comes from a long line of excellent watchdogs. When Gay was a puppy, she was attacked by a bad-tempered ram. This unfortunate experience gave her a fear of sheep. Her master, unsuccessful in trying to cure Gay of this fear, gives her to Jean, a New York visitor on the ranch. How Jean helps Gay to overcome her shyness is touchingly por-

trayed. The book ends with a dramatic account of how Gay finally proves her courage. Effective black and white drawings illustrate the story.

H. M. L.

The Witch of Scrapfaggot Green. By Patricia Gordon. Illustrated by William Pene du Bois. Viking, \$2.50.

When an American bulldozer released a witch long buried, amazing things began to happen in the English village. A light hearted tale of witchcraft which ends happily for all including the witch. Grades 5-7.

J. G. S.

Adopted Jane. By Helen Fern Darling. Illustrated by Kate Seredy. Harcourt, Brace and Company, \$2.00.

Jane lived in an orphan asylum and she did *not* have blue eyes and golden curls. The summer when she was ten and small for her age she received two invitations, one to visit in July a charming lady in a medium sized town, the other to spend August with a jolly family living on a farm. After she had gone back to the Home both families wanted to adopt her.

It is a wholesome story gaily told. Without ever moralizing, it shows the foundation of a happy, human relationships. Little girls will love it.

D. E. S.

The Favorite Uncle Remus. By Joel Chandler Harris. Illustrated by A. B. Frost. Houghton, \$3.00.

Although the selection of stories is good, one regrets another edition in which dialect and misspellings will stop the children of most sections of the country from ever enjoying the book themselves. Perhaps someday we will have a readable edition which will capture the essence of the folk tale whose delight lies not in accent but in characterization and plot. Meanwhile such books as *Lazy Liza Lizard* or *Indian Tales of Guatemala* will better serve the child who wants to read to himself. Recommended only where no edition of Uncle Remus is in the library, or for replacement.

J. G. S.

For Younger Children

White Snow, Bright Snow. By Alvin Tresselt. Illustrated by Roger Duvoisin. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, \$2.00.

To the child who has grown accustomed to a naughty-child-gets-into-trouble-gets-out-will-never-do-it-again kind of plot in his pre-school story diet and so demands clear-cut action in his stories, this book will be disappointing. To him it may seem that nothing happens in the story. Winter comes and then gradually changes into Spring, and that may not be enough for his palate.

But for other children, this book will abound in charm. Such homely incidents as the policeman's wife whose big toe hurt and so she knew it was going to snow will appeal to the sense of humor of many a boy and girl. Seeing the seasons change by observing the activities of the farmer, other children, some rabbits, will have an every-day appeal for many a child as he relates their experiences to what he himself does during the different seasons. And the poetic quality of the writing will delight both adult and child.

The book abounds in such gems of descriptive phrases as "Soft powdery sunflakes whispering gently as they sifted down." All too few of the modern books for children have this poetic quality.

The beautiful illustrations with their sharp color contrasts add to the appeal of this book for four to eight year olds.

C. B. S.

Flowers for Mother. By Katherine Evans. David McKay Company, \$1.50.

Whether it's Mother's Day, or mother's birthday, a gift for mother without a penny in the piggy bank is a major problem. But Davie and Rosie finally master it when they go out adventuring. How they search, and what they find, are bright spots

of memory for everyone who remembers picking dandelions for mom's bouquet. It's for the pre-school child to hear, and the primary child to read.

B. G. S.

Pogo's Farm Adventure, A Story of Soil. By Jo and Ernest Norling. Henry Holt, \$1.50.

Although this book entertainingly relates the playtime experiences of John and his dog Pogo as they spend a summer vacation on Beaver Creek Farm, the book also presents interesting information relating to soil conservation. John learns about controlled irrigation, gully dams, strip crops, contour plowing, and the rotation of crops.

Young children will enjoy this tale because of its simplicity of style and because of the human interest which characterizes the full-page illustrations.

H. M. L.

My First Picture Dictionary. Illustrated by Dorothy Grider. Wilcox and Follett, \$.60.

This book represents a stop between the simple alphabet book with its one picture per letter and the more advanced illustrated dictionaries for elementary school children. It contains 120 words in alphabetical order arranged four on a page, with attractive illustrations. The pre-school child will enjoy the book as a picture book

containing familiar objects. The primary child may experience the thrill of "reading" as he is able to call off the words on each page, with the pictures as a clue.

While many primary teachers will be pleased with the selection of words, since they duplicate the vocabulary of pre-primers and primers, it might be interesting to examine such a dictionary with a different basis for selection. Perhaps a picture dictionary with a vocabulary based upon the findings of Seashore's work with children's vocabularies might be a welcome departure from the apple-ball-cat-dog diet to which the young child is constantly exposed.

C. B. S.

Rosie the Rhino. By Marion Conger. Illustrated by Kurt Wiese. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, \$1.00.

If you've never trailed around town after a rhinoceros that unlatches her cage and nonchalantly walks out of the zoo, you can hardly appreciate Mr. Tuttle's adventure looking for Rosie. But Rosie turns out to be a patient and law-abiding pedestrian in the city streets, a likeable customer when she chooses a feminine whimsy of millinery in good taste, and selects an appropriate birthday gift for little Timothy.

The illustrations are as gay and happy as the text they accompany.

The book-jacket claims interest appeal from age 3 to 103, and readers will agree that their claim is valid.

B. G. S.

Jesus And His Friends. By Mary Alice Jones. Illustrated by Nedda Walker. Rand, McNally, \$1.25.

In simple language the author has retold thirteen episodes in the life of Jesus. Sunday School teachers of small children may find the book useful in making Biblical characters seem like real, everyday people. It is difficult to re-tell any Bible story without causing it to lose dignity. D. E. S.

Crimson Fairy Book. Collected and Edited by Andrew Lang. Illustrated by Ben Kutchner. With a foreword by Mary Gould Davis. Longmans, Green, \$2.50.

Violet Fairy Book. Collected and Edited by Andrew Lang. Illustrated by Dorothy Lake Gregory. With a foreword by Mary Gould Davis. Longmans, Green, \$2.50.

It is a satisfaction to have the classic colored fairy tales in new editions with clear, readable type and attractive illustrations. Storytellers and students of folkloves will appreciate the forewords by Mary Gould Davis who skillfully indicates that ideas know no geographical or national boundaries. These two collections are the fifth and sixth to be re-

vised. Already in new dress are the Red, Blue, Green, and Yellow Fairy Books. They have been children's favorites for nearly fifty years. It seems safe to predict that they will continue to be favorites as long as there are children. D. E. S.

Betsy And The Proud House. By Mary Urmston. Illustrated by Grace Paull. Doubleday, \$2.00.

Betsy Carr was prepared for a dreary summer vacation when her best friend went away to camp and

Betsy had no one to play with. But Betsy had plenty of enterprise, an understanding father and mother, and a little brown dog named Christopher Columbus. So endowed, it is small wonder that by the end of the vacation she had lots of friends and was living in the Proud House, the house of her dreams. A story of happy family life and nice normal children who are frequently noisy. There are boys and dogs in this tale as well as girls. The middle-graders will find it to their liking. D. E. S.

READING PROBLEMS ARE CAUSED

(Continued from Page 369)

us remember, also, that it is not alone the number of times a child meets a word which makes it easy for him. It is, rather, the richness of his experience which gives the symbol meaning. Always we must keep in mind the fact that merely knowing the techniques of reading is not enough. If we are going to combat the weakness in our social behavior deplored by Harold Hand, if we are going to have discussion groups as well attended as hat-making classes, we must provide opportunities for children to acquire the techniques of discussing issues about which they read.



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